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ROWLAND WILLIAMS, 1753.

Here lyeth a man, both body and bones,
He was by his trade a joiner of stones,
Ingraving of letters, and edging all,
And his coat of arms was three towers tall*.

EPITAPH ON A TOMBSTONE IN A CHURCH-YARD IN
WALES †.

Dust from dust at first was taken,
Dust by dust is now forsaken :
Dust in dust shall still remain,
Till dust from dust shall rise again.

IEUAN DDU O LAN TAW.

Swansea, April, 26, 1821:

EXTRACT FROM A MANUSCRIPT TOUR.

OWAIN GLYNDWR.

THERE are few tracts in North Wales, of equal extent with the road from Llangollen to Corwen, which present ~~so~~ beautiful a variety of scenery, and are so powerfully interesting in an historical point of view. About four miles from the former is Glyn-dyfrdwy, a delightful spot, and celebrated as having once witnessed the generous hospitality of the "last of Cambria's Patriots, wild Glyndwr." A green hillock, surrounded with oak and fir-trees, marks the place where the mansion of the chieftain was situated, and all the signs, that now remain of it, are a few loose and straggling stones, scattered about on the eminence. I have always entertained an enthusiastic veneration for the character of this heroic Welshman: but I am well aware that he has been often depreciated as an incorrigible traitor—as a cruel and blood-thirsty rebel. I do not, however, acknowledge the justice of this accusation. We are not to estimate his actions by the nice standard of civilized judgment, nor must we overlook his own

* The original word, for which *tall* is here substituted, is not legible.

† This is copied from an English periodical publication, which does not name the place.

private wrongs, and those of his suffering countrymen. Plunged as Wales then was in a state of the most oppressive slavery, the revolt of her brave people was an act of venial, nay of commendable, self-defence, rather than of traitorous disloyalty; and that man must have been bold and patriotic, indeed, and without one single particle of treason in his heart, who ventured to restore his country from a domination so despotic and powerful. But Owain Glyndwr would not have been that man, had he not been driven to arms by infamous and unendurable oppression. Amidst the recesses of his native hills, and in the bosom of an affectionate family, he lived in unambitious and contented retirement, delighting all with his hospitality, and dispensing numerous blessings among his devoted and happy dependants. But a malicious fiend broke in upon his solitude, and disturbed the even tenour of his life. Lord Reginald Grey of Ruthin, who had large possessions contiguous to those of the Welshman, upon some frivolous pretence or other, seized a considerable portion of land, which had long been the property of the Glyndwrs; nor would he give it up, till a suit in the courts of law was decided in favour of his adversary. This happened in the reign of Richard the Second; and, when Henry the Fourth ascended the throne, Grey, relying on the King's protection, again seized those lands which had been legally awarded to Owain. The chieftain sought redress by a petition to Parliament, but without effect, as his application was not even noticed; even this, aggravating as it must have been to a choleric Welshman, was not sufficient to provoke retaliation: there wanted however but another provocation, and that was quickly given. When Henry went on his first expedition against the Scots, he summoned all his chieftains to attend him with their vassals, and Glyndwr amongst others was ordered to attend the monarch with a certain number of his retainers. The writ of summons for his attendance was entrusted to Lord Grey, who purposely withheld it, till it was too late for the chieftain to obey: and the crafty nobleman then represented to the King, that Owain's absence was the result of his disobedience, obtaining at the same time a grant of all the Welshman's land, who was forthwith declared a traitor. It will be readily imagined, that this insult was too provoking to be endured unresistingly. Owain had endured enough already, and, with a chosen band of trusty followers, he laid waste the territories of Lord Grey, and soon recovered those lands, which had

been so unjustly taken from him. But this was not all. He had long witnessed the miseries of his country, smarting, as it was, under the tyrannic yoke of England, and he determined if possible to break this yoke, and restore Wales to her ancient independence. Besides, he most heartily detested the usurper Bolingbroke; for he was ardently attached to his unfortunate predecessor, and had served him in weal and woe with the most affectionate and unremitting fidelity*. There was yet another, and a powerful, incitement. Owain was a lineal descendant from the Royal House of Wales, and the sceptre of the Principality might be the reward of his valour. It was a splendid prize, well worth a contest. And England and Wales were soon involved in one of the most disastrous civil wars, which ever shook the stability of the English throne. Long and eagerly did the Welsh contend for the recovery of their rights, and, although they were considered in the outset as a puny barefooted rabble†, they speedily proved themselves the worthy inheritors of their fathers' heroic patriotism and sturdy valour. But the strong arm of England finally prevailed, and the Welsh were cast into a state of deep and merciless bondage, from which they did not emerge till the union of their country with England. But, notwithstanding the ill-success of Glyndwr, his undaunted spirit was unbroken and unsubdued to the last; and the English Monarch (Henry Fifth) did not deem it derogatory to his dignity to propose to him terms of mutual accommodation. Death, however, put an end to all the hero's enterprises, and, although more than four centuries have elapsed since he fought the battles of his country, the fame of his gallant achievements still lives unfaded in the breasts of his admiring countrymen.—Well, indeed, may we say of him:—

And he was once the glory of his age,
 ————— with every virtue
 Of civil life adorned, in arms excelling.
 His only blot was, that, *too much provoked*,
 He raised his vengeful arm against his sovereign.

* Glyndwr adhered to the cause of Richard the Second till the very last, and was taken prisoner with him in Flint Castle. He was knighted by this monarch, and appointed his *scutiger*, or body-squire. When Richard was deposed, he retired to Wales, where he resided till provoked to rebellion by Lord Grey.

† The Bishop of St. Asaph recommended in Parliament that measures somewhat less severe should be adopted with regard to Owain Glyndwr, and his partisans. He was answered by one of the English Peers in these words, 'Se de illis scurris nudipedibus non curare.'

It was a lovely evening when we stood on the mount where the Cambrian Patriot dwelt of yore ; and the birds, as they nestled in the oaken boughs above us, carolled in gladness their grateful song to the departed day. We sat down on one of the stones, which had perhaps formed a part of the chieftain's mansion, and indulged ourselves with one of those delightful reveries, which the serenity of the evening, the extreme beauty of the fertile dell, and the romantic associations, connected with it, were so well calculated to inspire. Here in this very spot (I thought) dwelt the heroic and spirited Glyndwr. Here did he exercise those hospitable rites, which so well became the Welsh Knight, and the man of goodly substance. Here was it that the first sparks of that valour were kindled, which burnt so fiercely ere they were quenched for ever ! Here, perhaps, were witnessed those signs, which are said to have ushered the Patriot into the world,—the “fiery shapes” in the heavens, the “frighted flocks and herds”—and all those portents which marked him extraordinary. And here was raised the voice of mourning and woe, when death conquered that spirit which man could never conquer ! And where are the tangible signs of his existence ?—Alas ! there are none in the secret valley of the Dee. His bones, with those of his brave warriors, have long since mouldered into dust, his mansion has fallen to the ground, and his fair domains are enjoyed by others. Yet the green hills surround the valley as they were wont, the verdant meads put on their gay attire in spring, and lose it again in autumn, and the river still glides on, unconscious of its vicinity to a spot so dear to the memory of the mountain peasant of Cambria. And thus it ever is : the stupendous and beautiful mechanism of Nature is not deranged by individual misfortune. “When I reflect,” observes an elegant writer, “what an inconsiderable atom every single man is, with respect to the whole creation, methinks it is a shame to be concerned at the removal of such a trivial animal as I am. The morning after my exit the sun will rise as bright as ever, the flowers smell as sweet, the plants spring as green, the world will proceed in its old course, people will laugh as heartily, and marry as fast, as they were used to do. The memory of man (as it is elegantly expressed in the Wisdom of Solomon) passeth away as the remembrance of a guest that tarrieth but one day.” R.